

Partial response to Sen. Blunt CMS 13-000-2902, regarding West Lake
Based on November 2012 fact sheet

EPA signed a Record of Decision (ROD) for West Lake Landfill OU-1, the radiologically-contaminated landfill cells, in May, 2008. This decision document describes the selected remedy of capping the waste in place, which includes the placement of an engineered cover system over the radiologically-contaminated areas, long-term groundwater monitoring, and the adoption of institutional controls to restrict access.

After the ROD was signed, EPA continued to receive public comments about the selected remedy. In response to those comments, EPA tasked the potentially-responsible parties (PRPs) in 2010 to conduct a Supplemental Feasibility Study (SFS) for OU-1 that further evaluated the ROD-selected remedy, as well as full-scale excavation of the radiologically-contaminated landfill material and disposal either at a permitted off-site facility or in a new, on-site engineered disposal cell. EPA approved and released the final SFS report to the public in December 2011.

The estimated costs defined for each alternative in the SFS report exceeded the threshold which triggered review by EPA's National Remedy Review Board (NRRB) in early 2012. The NRRB provided recommendations for additional studies relating to the SFS Report. These include: evaluating additional groundwater sampling to refresh the data; conducting a more detailed study of a partial excavation alternative where only the most-contaminated material is removed; and conducting a more detailed analysis of potential treatment technologies for the radiologically-contaminated landfill material.

In June, 2012, EPA Region 7 tasked the PRPs to conduct these additional studies. EPA Region 7 also conducted vertical gamma scans of monitoring wells at the site in November 2012 and updated gamma scans of the surface of OU-1 in March, 2013. In July and August 2012, the PRPs conducted the first round of additional groundwater sampling, and will conduct three more rounds in 2013. Once the additional studies and groundwater sampling are complete, EPA will release a new proposed plan for an amended remedy and will take public comment on this proposed plan.

The high level of interest in West Lake Landfill has compelled EPA to undertake these additional studies to further demonstrate to the public that the remedy that is eventually implemented at OU-1 is protective of human health and the environment.

People are not being exposed to the radiologically-contaminated waste at OU-1 at this time, because the site is fenced to prevent access. The groundwater beneath the site, which has been found to be contaminated in isolated areas, is not being used as a source of drinking water.